United Nations A/59/454

General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 November 2004
English
Original: Arabic

Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 60

Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Mohamed Ali Saleh **Alnajar** (Yemen)

I. Introduction

1. The item entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" was included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolution 58/32 of 8 December 2003.

2. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2004, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 1st meeting, on 30 September 2004, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely items 57 to 72, which was held at the 2nd to 9th meetings, on 4, 5, 7, 8 and 11 to 14 October (see A/C.1/59/PV.2-9). Thematic discussions on the items were held and draft resolutions introduced and considered at the 10th to 16th meetings, from 18 to 22 and on 25 October (see A/C.1/59/PV.10-16). Action on all draft resolutions was taken at the 17th to 23rd meetings, from 26 to 28 October and on 1 and 3 to 5 November (see A/C.1/59/PV.17-23).

4. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/116 and Add.1).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.2 and Rev.1

5. At the 15th meeting, on 22 October, the representative of the Russian Federation introduced a draft resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" (A/C.1/59/L.2).

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6. At its 17th meeting, on 26 October, the Committee had before it a revised draft resolution (A/C.1/59/L.2/Rev.1), which contained the following changes:

(a) The last preambular paragraph, which had read: "Confirming the request to the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 4 of its resolutions 56/19 and 57/53" was deleted;

(b) A reference to documents A/59/116 and Add.1 was added in footnote 2;

(c) Operative paragraph 4, which had read:

"4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to consider existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them, and to conduct a study on the concepts referred to in paragraph 2 of the present resolution, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts, established in 2004, appointed by him on the basis of equitable geographical distribution and with the help of Member States in a position to render such assistance, and to submit a report on the outcome of the study to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session",

was replaced with the following text:

"4. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Secretary-General is considering existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them, and is conducting a study on the concepts referred to in paragraph 2 of the present resolution, with the assistance of the group of governmental experts, established in 2004, pursuant to resolution 58/32 and will submit a report on the outcome of the study to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session";

(d) The word "also" was added before the words "notes with satisfaction" in operative paragraph 5.

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.2/Rev.1 without a vote (see para. 8).

III. Recommendation of the First Committee

8. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 53/70 of 4 December 1998, 54/49 of 1 December 1999, 55/28 of 20 November 2000, 56/19 of 29 November 2001, 57/53 of 22 November 2002 and 58/32 of 8 December 2003,

Recalling also its resolutions on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, in which, inter alia, it recognized that scientific and technological developments could have both civilian and military applications and that progress in science and technology for civilian applications needed to be maintained and encouraged,

Noting that considerable progress has been achieved in developing and applying the latest information technologies and means of telecommunication,

Affirming that it sees in this process the broadest positive opportunities for the further development of civilization, the expansion of opportunities for cooperation for the common good of all States, the enhancement of the creative potential of humankind and additional improvements in the circulation of information in the global community,

Recalling in this connection, the approaches and principles outlined at the Information Society and Development Conference, held in Midrand, South Africa, from 13 to 15 May 1996,

Bearing in mind the results of the Ministerial Conference on Terrorism, held in Paris on 30 July 1996, and the recommendations that it made,[1]

Noting that the dissemination and use of information technologies and means affect the interests of the entire international community and that optimum effectiveness is enhanced by broad international cooperation,

Expressing its concern that these technologies and means can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure of States to the detriment of their security in both civil and military fields,

Considering that it is necessary to prevent the use of information resources or technologies for criminal or terrorist purposes,

Noting the contribution of those Member States that have submitted their assessments on issues of information security to the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraphs 1 to 3 of resolutions 53/70, 54/49, 55/28, 56/19, 57/53 and 58/32,

[1] See A/51/261, annex.

Taking note of the reports of the Secretary-General containing those assessments,[2]

Welcoming the initiative taken by the Secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in convening an international meeting of experts in Geneva in August 1999 on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, as well as its results,

Considering that the assessments of the Member States contained in the reports of the Secretary-General and the international meeting of experts have contributed to a better understanding of the substance of issues of international information security and related notions,

1. *Calls upon* Member States to promote further at multilateral levels the consideration of existing and potential threats in the field of information security, as well as possible measures to limit the threats emerging in this field, consistent with the need to preserve the free flow of information;

2. *Considers* that the purpose of such measures could be served through the examination of relevant international concepts aimed at strengthening the security of global information and telecommunications systems;

3. *Invites* all Member States to continue to inform the Secretary-General of their views and assessments on the following questions:

(a) General appreciation of the issues of information security;

(b) Definition of basic notions related to information security, including unauthorized interference with or misuse of information and telecommunications systems and information resources;

(c) The content of the concepts mentioned in paragraph 2 above;

4. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Secretary-General is considering existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them, and is conducting a study on the concepts referred to in paragraph 2 above, with the assistance of the group of governmental experts, established in 2004 pursuant to resolution 58/32, and will submit a report on the outcome of the study to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session;

5. *Also notes with satisfaction* that the group of governmental experts established by the Secretary-General held its first session from 12 to 16 July 2004 in New York and that it intends to convene two more sessions in 2005 to fulfil its mandate specified in resolution 58/32;

6. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session the item entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security".

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[2] A/54/213, A/55/140 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/56/164 and Add.1, A/57/166 and Add.1, A/58/373 and A/59/116 and Add.1.